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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/529,391	06/06/2000	JEFFREY S. HAGGARD	0818.0014C	7035

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EXAMINER

YAO, SAM CHAUN CUA

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
1733	10

DATE MAILED: 07/18/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

MF/10

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/529,391	HAGGARD ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Sam Chuan C. Yao	1733

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 1 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-100 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) ____ is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) 1-100 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 11) The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.
 If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
 12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
 * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
 14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
 a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
 15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) ____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Election/Restrictions

1. Applicant's election with traverse of Group III, claims 1-41 in Paper No. 9 is acknowledged. The traversal is on the ground(s) that all groups have a common special technical feature relating to "heating of plural-component fibers to cause differential heat shrinkage of first and second materials in the fibers such that the fibers separate into segments". This is not found persuasive because Examiner agrees. However, as correctly noted by a prior Examiner in Paper No. 7 numbered paragraph 2, such technical feature appears to be taught by Mathes.

PCT Rule 13.2 states "Where a group of invention is claimed in one and the same international application, the requirement for unity of invention referred to in Rule 13.1 shall be fulfilled only when there is a technical relationship among those inventions involving one or more of the same or corresponding special technical features. The expression 'special technical features' shall mean those technical features that define a contribution which each of the claimed invention, considered as a whole, makes over the prior art." (emphasis added, quotation in original). In other words, for groups of claims that SHARE a special technical feature(s), a holding that these groups of claims lack unity of invention is proper when it can be shown that the SHARED special technical feature does not define a contribution over the prior art. As for the present case, as noted above, Examiner has provided a prima facie evidence that the shared special technical feature fails to define over the prior art.

2. This application contains claims directed to more than one species of the generic invention. These species are deemed to lack unity of invention because they are not so linked as to form a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1.

The species are as follows:

Species A: extruding and depositing splittable fibers to form a web and then applying heat to the web to cause separation of splittable fibers.

Species B: applying heat to extruded splittable fibers to separate the fibers, and then depositing the separated fibers to form a web.

Applicant is required, in reply to this action, to elect a single species to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable. The reply must also identify the claims readable on the elected species, including any claims subsequently added. An argument that a claim is allowable or that all claims are generic is considered non-responsive unless accompanied by an election.

Upon the allowance of a generic claim, applicant will be entitled to consideration of claims to additional species which are written in dependent form or otherwise include all the limitations of an allowed generic claim as provided by 37 CFR 1.141. If claims are added after the election, applicant must indicate which are readable upon the elected species. MPEP § 809.02(a).

3. The claims are deemed to correspond to the species listed above in the following manner:

Claims 1-21 appear to belong to species A; while claims 22-41 appear to belong to species B

The following claim(s) are generic: no claim is generic to both species.

4. The species listed above do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT Rule 13.1 because, under PCT Rule 13.2, the species lack the same or corresponding special technical features for the following reasons: the process steps required by these two species are patentably distinct and mutually exclusive from each other.

5. In light of a new group of restriction/species election presented by Examiner, this requirement is made NON-FINAL.

6. On July 17, 2002, a telephone interview between Examiner Yao and Mr. Andrew Aldag was conducted. Mr. Aldag was informed that the elected groups needs to be broken down into two sub-groups, since the two subgroups are patentably distinct species. A request for an oral election to the above restriction requirement was also made during the telephone interview, but did not result in an election being made.

Applicant is advised that the reply to this requirement to be complete must include an election of the invention to be examined even though the requirement be traversed (37 CFR 1.143).

7. Applicant is reminded that upon the cancellation of claims to a non-elected invention, the inventorship must be amended in compliance with 37 CFR 1.48(b) if one or more of the currently named inventors is no longer an inventor of at least one claim remaining in the application. Any amendment of inventorship must be accompanied by a request under 37 CFR 1.48(b) and by the fee required under 37 CFR 1.17(i).

Art Unit: 1733

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Sam Chuan C. Yao whose telephone number is (703) 308-4788. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday with second Friday off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Michael W Ball can be reached on (703) 308-2058. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 305-7115 for regular communications and (703) 305-7718 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0651.



Sam Chuan C. Yao
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1733

scy
July 17, 2002